



*The* **B**ayou **R**evue

**Spring** 1996

*The*

**Bayou**

**Review**

**Spring 1996**

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**Spring 1996**

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The University of Houston-**Downtown**

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# **A**cknowledgements

The staff of *The Bayou Review* wishes to express our sincerest gratitude to those students, faculty, and staff who took time to participate in the creation of this journal. Through your participation,

other students will surely be inspired.

It is my great hope that this type of activity will one day flourish at this university because of the diverse, unique voices that continue to exist within these walls.

Special thanks to *Dr. JoAnn Pavletich, Dr. Catherine Civello, Patrick Farrell, and Natalie Martinez* for doing a wonderful job selecting the submissions to be published. Your time, patience, and effort will not be forgotten.

Lastly, I will always appreciate the opportunity I've had to be a creative part of this university.

Jon Pulcini  
*Editor*

*For Maria*

*In gentile, c'e la speranza;  
in la speranza, c'e la liberta;  
in la liberta, c'e comprensione;  
in comprensione, c'e la pace.*

# C

ontents

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*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum  
subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis  
avari.*

*Virgil (Georgics 2.490-92)*

*(Blessed is he who is able to win knowledge of the  
causes of things, and has cast beneath his feet all fear  
and unyielding Fate, and the howls of hungry  
Acheron.)*

*translated by H.R. Fairclough*

The Easter stars are shining  
above the lights that are flashing--  
coronal of the black--

Nobody

to say it--

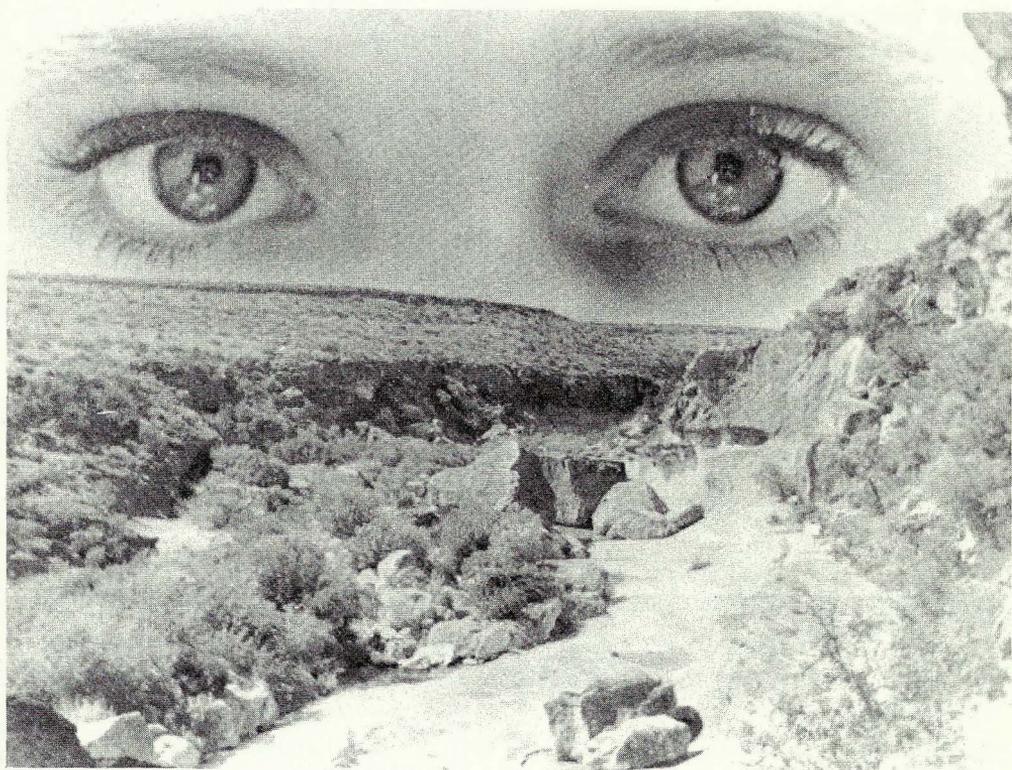
Nobody to say: pinholes

Thither I would carry her  
among the lights--  
Burst it asunder  
break through to the fifty words  
necessary--

a crown for her head with  
castles upon it, skyscrapers  
filled with nut-chocolates--

dovetame winds--  
stars of tinsel  
from the great cornucopia  
of glass

*William Carlos Williams, from Spring and All*



## Alchemy of an Evolution

primal rage on a mortal page; follow the tides not the sage.  
geophysics edge-walk the line; ask me how i feel- i feel just fine.  
we have lost our meaning in syntax; vernacular doorway and  
computer fax.

drifting-a continental sifting; lifting-a wallet, now its grifting.  
the scene of my time is a biological crime written in slime.  
the book of ages is the history encrypted as a conqueror's  
mystery.

the prophet blinks and unlocks a key; clear as hell-the life of a  
tree.

color-coded messages to human life; classified-preordained with  
the scales and knife.

the cutting edge and alpha black; move through night's putrid  
cellar sacks.

rotting decay-the forward decline; it is the first of all the signs.  
set the fire, intense the flame; burn all your luggage-burn your  
name.

seeping prisms slowly gray; the wind only knows what i am  
about to say.

ascending high up into flight, the darkness lifts and all is white.  
the visions surpass the land and sea, past the disease that is  
humanity.

cylinders, cones, and rods allure like the truths we flush down  
the sewer.

the watchful eyes adjust the water; make it colder, now make it  
hotter.  
golden arrival and i am fed; the moment of the crux and i see  
red.  
liquid measure-philosopher's stone; see if the distance is what  
you are shown.  
we have reached the eye of disorder; crystal-ball chaos and a  
power-hoarder.  
if all the creatures that are right now seek just to rob the cradle  
and kill the plow,  
the world will know its modern era, a common fall- a tilting trend.  
then the planet will consume us all like a cat eats fleas, and all the  
honey from all the bees.  
the earth will soon eat who it feeds; all the money-all the papers  
and all the deeds.  
the word was spread and torn to lies;  
confusion and fear-international spies.  
believe in your ancient, hidden heart, and practice a life as pure as  
your art  
for the survival of our species' sake is a must: the gathering of  
nations into dust.

**Andrew Schultz**

**R**efuse

Life is a stage

so I've been told

I then choose to be the potted plant.

**Vittorio Bonomi**



**D**anger **Z**one

Dark Dark Despair  
Dungeon hole in Deep Black Purple  
Nonexistent walls close in  
Pounding energies creeping in  
In the Dark  
In the Deep  
Dungeon of Despair  
Through a hole, a face peers in  
A shining Light to show the way  
The Beauty face of my Angel Child  
No, I will not give up today;  
Perhaps tomorrow.

*Loren Lancaster*

## **W**e're **R**obbing the **B**ank **J**oday

This unity will be our train to the Bahamas,  
no more robbing big-time birdcatchers for their wrens,  
no more jacking people for money, rings, and chains.  
Allies, we're going to add a little class to the crime today;  
we're going to rob the bank my friends.

Martin will be the clown walking down Main St., Letty the old  
lady pulling the check. (heard Wig Plaza has got some  
pretty good threads.)

Make sure you get enough balloons to cover the gats,  
take out the security with a whack to the head.

Moses and I will be down the street to drive you away,  
the others will create wrecks to block police routes.

No killing if possible; avoid publications. Faces, no moves  
will be made if I see any doubts.

This toast is to that dream of one day having it all,  
swimming pools in our living rooms, billiard balls reflecting  
against liquor bottles,  
one more win on our obituaries,  
and relax ourselves of these crime-mind throttles.

**W**e're **R**obbing the **B**ank **J**oday (*cont'd*)

We're going to steal the only richness that we don't have,  
the one that makes their world rotate;  
we're going for it all this evening,  
we're killing the queen on her final date.  
This corrupted world will ride with us Horsemen,  
to be treated and tossed in and out of the jails,  
feeling the coldness we felt through probationers' view,  
ridding ourselves of these nails that pin us against  
poverty's trails.

**Antonio Soria, Jr.**

## The **W**inter **S**pring

The sirens invade relentlessly  
my concrete canyons  
my car  
and my ethereal Bach.

Echoes and people  
exhaust and laughter  
an exotic blend  
dispensed by the local Mac Donalds.

Splashes of color  
screechin' brakes  
whining bus screams  
all infuse the Spring glare with agreeable discontent.

**Vittorio Bonomi**

## Wildflowers in the Rose Garden

We were the wildflowers,  
they were the roses.  
We had weeds, they had none.  
We started out in separate gardens,  
then somehow, we were all in one!

The gardener looked across the lot,  
shook his head, "what is this I see?  
Wildflowers in the roses? Get out! OUT!  
Don't mix with these beautiful roses!  
You'll ruin the soil where they grow!"

The wildflowers drooped and paled,  
as beautiful flowers they had failed.  
Now the roses smirked and laughed,  
"We belong in his beloved garden!  
You! Get out! GET OUT!"

Now and then, he glanced our way,  
but mostly, we had to wait... and wait,  
for sun... for rain...  
for admiration that never came.

Loving him still, and shading his grave.  
Our colors paled, our petals fell,  
crashing to the earth below.

Oh, now and then the gardener walked  
along the wildflowers edge,  
and every time they perked right up,  
“Pick me! Pick me!”, they each would beg,  
But he always picked the roses.

They had no choice, the wildflowers grew  
forsaken for roses, another man’s land.  
Some are still waiting for the gardener’s hand  
to pick one of them, maybe this time?  
Poor little wildflowers, left again.

The gardener’s season is over now,  
returned to the soil where wild things grow.  
The roses all gone, but the wildflowers live on  
where the gardener sleeps forever.

“It’s gentler now,” the wildflowers say  
of the gardener’s requited love,  
as his tears rain sweetly upon them,  
they grow and at last. . . they know.

**Anita Hunt**

The **JV Blues**

What I'd like to see,  
I said  
Is you turn off the TV.

But watching it is free,  
they said  
It's what we like to see.

It's a favor to me,  
I said  
Please turn off the TV.

Not even NBC?,  
they said  
It's what you like to see.

You'll get bent over my knee,  
I said  
If you don't turn off that damned TV.

Then their faces grew quite heavy  
and they shuffled off to bed  
to learn what it was like to see  
Something other than that damn TV.

***Karen Farrell***

## More Than a Walk

Another morn has risen from her bedding  
giving the pedestrian his shadows against bundled rocks,  
the boulevards and freeways are hollering with a million people  
on board,  
someone footsteps the back streets of the Irvington blocks.  
Accompanied by friends, a hatred merger within the breezing of  
our legs,  
along with the memories when I walked my girlfriend home,  
the Burbank schools when our parents forced the launch,  
sweaty foreheads causing the uptight tone.  
Today, destiny has placed and left me without choice,  
searching for backways and shortcuts to establish a presence with  
my colleagues,  
the trip on foot so thoughtful compared to the boredom before,  
every moment of glancing has me deeply intrigued.  
Somebody up there has given me a chance to start over,  
a loan to appreciate the little freedom taken for granted,  
my hood is convinced to set higher standards,  
based on the torn down facilities where my infancy slanted.

**M**ore **J**han a **W**alk (*cont'd*)

The houses passed include friends with families and wives,  
standing on their porch pushing me on,  
nothing beats walking the sidewalks of Janowski,  
where the kids declare rockfights and make the will strong.  
Everyday my bewilderment crashes with a couple holding hands,  
who are graced passively with a smile in the frost,  
cars pulling over questioning the response when morally soaring;  
No, I don't want a ride from these fifteen minutes lost!

**Antonio Soria, Jr.**

## Alabama Still

The road slipping into Montgomery  
drifting by Granddaddy's old house  
at the front of a dead-end street  
the house empty even when it was full of us children  
my Brother and I, my Dad, and Uncle Don before  
playing with the rat traps and pull-string trains  
the house away from home- it was a peach  
it was a plum- it was commiserate  
like the quiet in the backyard garden  
with the road that stank of burning tar  
the taste of it stuck on the roof of my mouth  
like a Miracle Whip and banana sandwich  
I can taste it-  
still  
like I can remember my footprints stuck in  
the fresh asphalt street  
a little hollow in the solid mix  
but that's always me in the end  
with no respect for my omnipotence

## Alabama Still (*cont'd*)

I am king of my dead-end street  
and its only subject inside Montgomery  
just like I used to play a while ago  
now that the tar isn't clogging my voice  
I still can't breathe a word  
that deserves to be listened.

I am alive and beaten  
the result of my brethren  
the end of the means  
and just another hollow in the mix

-I am still-

My Grandmaw's lakehome  
standing cinderblocks  
painted lime green like the water  
if the sun struck it right  
the pier stretching itself out  
of the seawall and red clay shore  
slithering by the tin-roofed boathouse  
like the copperheads, cottonmouths, and water moccasins  
ended by the lake too dark to see through  
that I swam in anyway

holding my breath  
to see how long I could stay under  
the weight of the water- I sank like a brick  
straight into the black-slime bottom  
in the ease it held me in  
and that I am sinking in that silt  
still  
freshwater sharks  
the kind that live in swimming pools  
and snapping turtles, alligators, and large-mouth bass  
tickling my big toe  
make me kick loose of that mud  
and sent me scampering out  
looking over my shoulder expecting  
a toothy grin and a wink  
-I never saw one-  
does it mean it was not there?  
I determined myself to not forget my nerve again  
until the next day when I went for my swim  
Grandmaw always waited for me  
with a beach towel bigger than a sheet  
fresh out of the dryer and smelling like the heat  
to melt the chill out of my neck

**A**labama **S**till (*cont'd*)

she was always there  
with a look on her face of a question  
or a prayer  
and were they always the same  
to me playing in the lake  
somewhere in my half-forgotten game

-I am still-

*Justin Ryan McLendon*

## The Stillness of War

Here are the guns you requested Aguelito,  
to continue the war that Carter started,  
the only soldier left of your army,  
the others have gone back to Mexico as the dead exported.

“Shhh, don’t tell anybody that we’ve ended up on  
the enemy side,  
they don’t notice a distinction for I’m often fed by them,  
across the room lies a woman claiming to be my wife,  
with Mexican names as their cover-up pens.”

“Look, look out the window and tell me what you see,  
yea, they got the “changos” working for them now,  
late at night they trade ammunition for money,  
each killing the other with movements of the clouds.”

“Bring me the ringer, Mijo, so I can call Carter at his house,  
we’ll make a treaty at the will of my lands,  
don’t let the outsiders see you bringing it in,  
or we’ll both be executed by American hands.”

The **S**tillness of **W**ar (*cont'd*)

“Better yet, here’s another plan sketched,  
I’ll fool President Carter then kill him myself,  
set up the meeting in Mexico and bring the chariot,  
we’re going to use the American flag as our belt.”  
the same corruption that killed him.

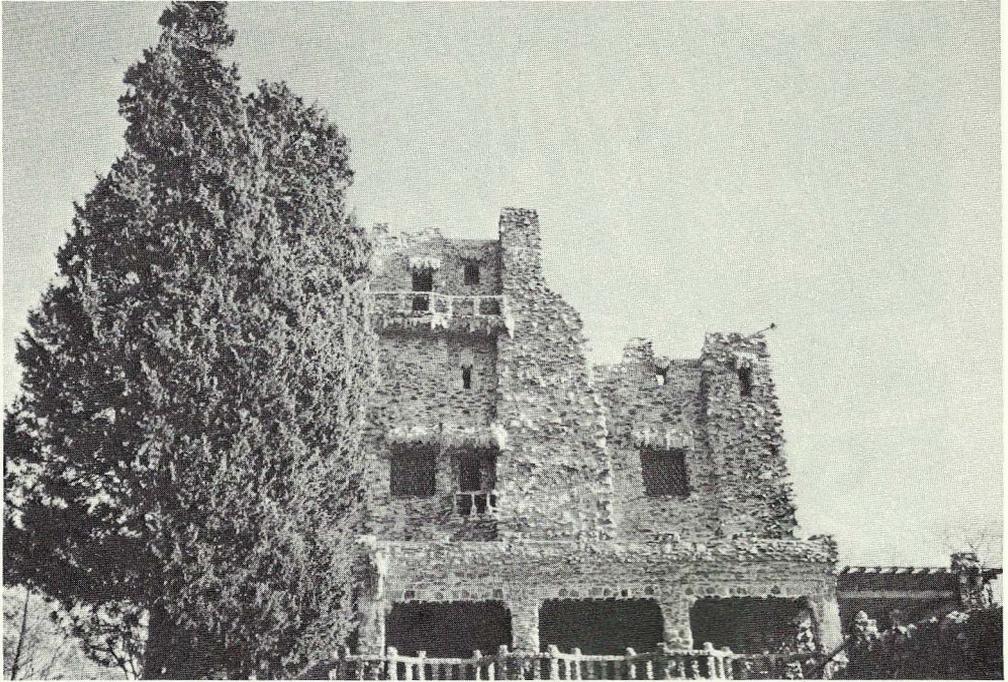
Every time the blankness closed, “Is Gramps still living on his  
crazy stories?”

Actually, it’s hard to find a craziness in the great man’s limbs,  
he feared the chaos now found in the world,  
the same corruption that killed him.

*Dedicated to Vicente Aguirre*

***Antonio Soria, Jr.***





## Dear Psychologist

Prize me, prize me, Miss Kimberly Donalson!  
The Antonio of the bipolars at his extreme,  
our compromise meant you would keep me away from these  
somatizations,  
damn nurses come in every second applauding my dreams.  
Return the four walls that those klux took from me,  
slapping my posters into my sexual desires,  
these fools get into pulmonary incidents when barely breathing  
my feelings,  
imagine when I crawl the ceiling without my attire.  
After seeing all the planting that designed this green house,  
possibilities floated to conquer their problems,  
my words have made love to all of your patients,  
but after the ecstasy, it's right back to the solemn.  
You promised me nature, you promised me wings,  
over a victory to my suicidal thoughts,  
it's been two years since my love poems to the after,  
yet you won't release me because of my worth to the slot.

**D**ear **P**sycho**l**ogist (*cont'd*)

“Doctor, you have no right to keep me here!”  
never once could you convince me I was crazy to hold,  
this jar has trapped me with the base of pure lying,  
injecting me with ‘Anti’s’ supposedly to pick up my lows.  
Turn off the recorder, Kim, psychologists should not play with  
their patients,  
let me show you once again how to steal the dimness from this  
home,  
or go ahead and record a poet’s mastery,  
to show your scholared staff the real reason why you haven’t let  
me go.

**Antonio Soria, Jr.**

## San Cristobal

Let me open with a nightmare: just some stuffing from  
my pillowed head...

anticipation; the wordless month now gone. vanished into  
boundless eternities.

The snow blew in with harsh winter realities.

the somber mountains

and hills giving way first to the golden warning of  
autumnal celebration,

and then on into bare-limbed slumber. the days drift by with  
the possibilities of December.

the 'ands' and 'ifs' of a holiday in Texas. finalization.  
fragmentation.

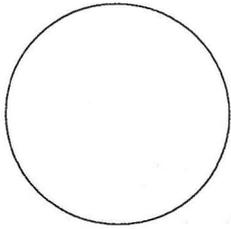
I drift with the days from vegetables, rice and beans  
to chocolate, candies, and ice cream.

rich sauces wake me in the deepest hours of my slumber.  
the pen is thick, but willing: I cruise the streets of my mind  
taking notes, photographs, and eye-witness accounts  
of the carnage  
and of the construction.

## San Cristobal (*cont'd*)

the zen-like Arroyo San Cristobal flows steadfast over rock  
spillways  
sounding off against the dead calm of the snowlit-quiet-white  
day.  
and through the night, the depth of the peace is disturbing  
amidst the calls for war and destruction in our world.  
we move beyond what we really know.  
and thus the dream ends with prayers for a quick departure  
whenever the time may come.

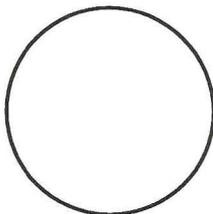
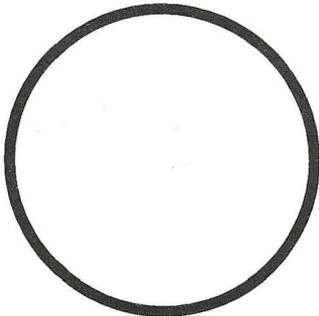
*Andrew Schultz*



The **C**ircles

(a Haiku)

orbs vary orbits  
the elliptical clashes  
with the eccentric



*Karen Farrell*

## *L* a *F* amilia *S* oria

Biographer; this small hut is where we became what we now are,  
where our father created a dynasty too strong to control,  
chiseled us so alike that we could never bond together,  
from there, we fell easily into the witch's spirit hole.  
Step into the block paneling, exposure of Daddy's magic,  
the old brown rug where as kids we played with blocks,  
the flowers watching carefully from their favorite vase,  
a collector intervenes in the battle of two fighting cocks.  
That long line of frames, those are us as tamed children  
perfectly sequenced from the young to the old,  
Mayra, Rene, Liliana, Noemi, and me,  
dressed nicely for picture day because mother never failed.  
No one could say wrong things of my sisters,  
without getting slapped or fearing my response,  
overprotectiveness prayed for the best after the suffering,  
just so immature hunters would catch my blood fawns.

The long hair that strings the trimming,  
occupying her space rightfully as the queen of her throne,  
often looked as the weak, yet is the heart of all members,  
overwhelming pureness into the gate of carved stones.  
We, we are not that united family who eats dinner with prayers  
at the table,  
hard struggling has forced our own admiration to reign,  
although we may never be like others fortunate depending,  
our shoulders are to the world as the strong links to the chain.

***Antonio Soria, Jr.***

## Not Again

Feeling so unsure  
Each step I take seems more  
Like treading water than stepping forward  
Wavering in the wake of each new instance  
Disappointment waits around every corner  
I wait for it like an expectant mourner  
It always shows itself in stages  
I never have to wait too long  
Like an unwelcome guest it arrives on time  
Just at a point when I think  
Perhaps it's past, it will not show  
Soon all my hopes will sink  
As the knock comes at my door  
If only once a week would pass  
With no signs of regression  
Disappointment hiding its face at last  
Just one week feeling nothing but passion  
Feeling so unsure  
Too ready for "the other shoe to drop"  
Just once I'd like to be disappointed  
In Disappointment not showing up

*Loren Lancaster*

## **F**rozen **M**orning

december mornings cold with a chill wind blowing all around - quietly, but with conviction. the clouds crash into the mountain peaks above without a sound. a blanket of gray and white and an eternal flame for the afternoon. a sprinkling of snow. the unhurried pace of nature - teaching, always teaching. (whether we care to learn or not).

frozen breezes and vigorous sneezes. the bleak skyline is everything - beauty and the beast. it engulfs the psyche and dissolves the mind. it is morning meditation music throbbing forward with a delicate thunder. a cacophony. an orchestra. space whisper. and in deafness, a shout.

the light snow sends icicles down my house's spine and mine. and now in time, the world revolves - man evolves - and dangerous, murderous thoughts drift from peak to peak from resort to resort, tapping our pocketbooks and personal religions. come, jagged creek, show me the way home.

**Andrew Schultz**

## Dichotomy

Images haunt my soul  
with flashes of emptiness  
where lonely voyagers are chilled  
by echoes of solitude and darkness  
living the forever-yesterdays  
at the never-tomorrows  
dreaming of empty houses that flow,  
out  
in  
orgasmic  
waves  
at  
2  
a.m.

Dreaming of flying boats of wonderland  
of Augustinian love  
of letterman jackets  
of fine! China figurine on the window sill  
and of crystal carrouseles  
that ran forever in circles on bedroom tables.

Dead poems are unfortunately docked on the river Styx.  
Arias for their part leave us hollow  
And inspiration is a fast escalator ride down into nowadays.

Transitory madness  
Precious gifts emanate from smiling, radiant brown eyes  
who cares if Beatrice and the Gentile Knight have slain dragons  
All they do now is drink Ensure  
the elixir of predictability.

***Vittorio Bonomi***

the **S**eeds of **f**aith

the attic doors, the life-giving chores, the work we've done and  
have yet to do.

all the motions of the axe. the cracking whack.  
whittling pieces of a tree - a trunk - a log into a night's warmth.  
crackle. crackle. roar and sputter.

the sulfur-tipped seeds of faith insure my comfort for another  
night.

whooshing up the valley, sending treetops into a wonderful  
synchronization of ballets and ballroom dances,  
the wind creates serious eyes staring within their cores.  
the seeds of faith... leaping out of narrow streets and winding  
drives.

the path of two gates: one up high and one down here.  
clear as a bell. an old cement mixer, a rusty car frame.

The cool collection of cans and bottles held fast to their ancient  
mother.

my eye jumps. my eyes widen.

the fury and the witness of the arroyo leaves me parched and  
dry.

the seeds of faith pouring from the sky:

tumbling, tumbling unique and exotic.

flitting, flinging occasionally erotic.

the tantalizing powder melts upon touch.

all these seeds of faith licking their chops  
ready to eat.

***Andrew Schultz***

## **F**abric, **C**lothes, and **B**ed **Q**UILTS

My mind wonders in awe  
in and out of dusty  
dark  
unvented hallways  
shaking loose the specters of time,  
opening the cobweb curtains  
that for so long had refused the light.

The dust  
scratches, scrapes the marble floors  
as a child's footsteps crunch and crackle with laden weight.

Nonna e Teto eternally pursuing Melvillian pleasures  
clothes and laundry unravel with the fabric of time  
as do dreams and everydayness  
while images leave a crystal Oscar  
that people see through with closed eyes  
straining to move  
cracking  
chipping  
its skin  
leaving me with bloody hands  
unable to hold back and suppress the tide.

**Vittorio Bonomi**

## The Ruins

they eat with pieces  
of themselves scattered on the floor  
with the roses

the empty kitchen  
serves only thought and fear, little taste

how many others have asked,  
is this a bed  
or a boxing ring  
(they must ask the person in the mirror,  
then they can rest)

the warmth of the blood-red walls  
enrages  
the passion from the easy chair  
surrounded by the antique  
volumes of self-taught knowledge  
gathering dust

The **R**uins (*cont'd*)

the sewing machine is purely ornamental  
and off on a side track, death  
and emptiness

**Karen Farrell**

